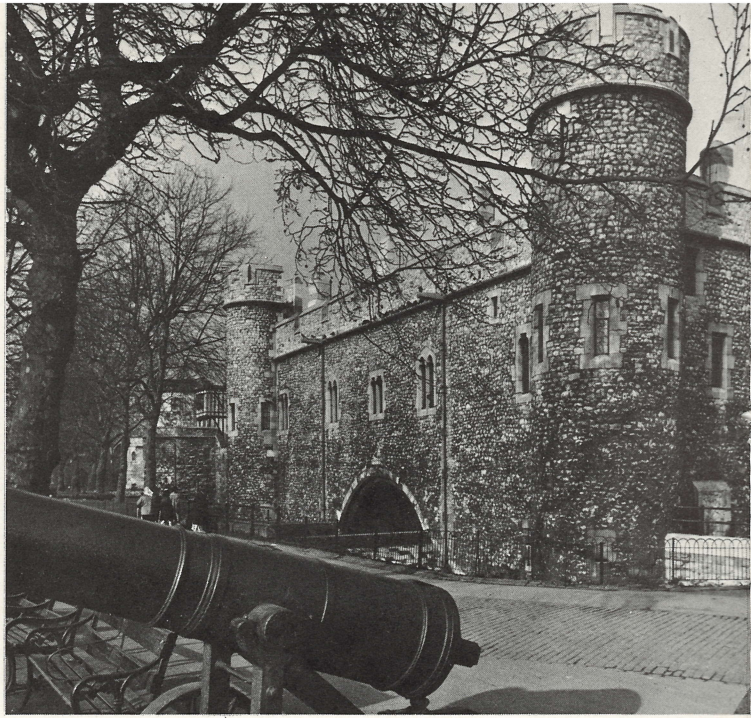


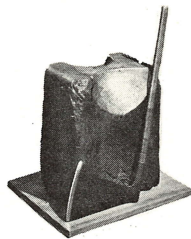
Prisoners in the Tower







PRISONERS IN THE TOWER



FRONT COVER: *This picture commemorates the imprisonment of Charles Duke of Orleans (1391-1465), and comes from a manuscript copy of his poems in the British Museum (Royal, 16 F ii, f.73). BACK COVER: The Bloody Tower, where the 'little Princes' are said to have been murdered, and the Wakefield Tower, reputed scene of the assassination of Henry VI (1421-1471). INSIDE COVER: Top left, Sir*

Thomas More (1478-1535), and, below, his cell in the Bell Tower, now part of the Queen's house, residence of the Governor. Bottom right, Lady Arabella Stuart (1575-1615), cousin of James I, who made a secret marriage and died 'distracted' in the Tower. Above right, St Thomas's Tower over

the water-gate, commonly called Traitors' Gate. ABOVE: Traitors' Gate. When the Thames was a highway the water-gate was used as an entrance and became known as Traitors' Gate because many prisoners were brought this way. Queen Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife, and later her daughter, the future Elizabeth I, both reached the Tower by barge and passed beneath its wide arch.

PRISONERS IN THE TOWER

Olwen Hedley

CONFINEMENT in the Tower of London has been the lot of more people than can now be numbered. Many of its prisoners are beyond remembrance. Their very names have been forgotten. Most of those whom history commemorates are drawn from the long roll of kings and queens, statesmen and ecclesiastics committed to its towers, which only too often they exchanged for the still narrower straitness of the grave.

At the head of this ghostly procession comes a rapacious prelate, Ranulf Flambard, Bishop of Durham and minister of William II. On 15 August 1100, thirteen days after his master's death he was arrested by order of Henry I. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that on the advice of

those around him, the new king 'had Bishop Ranulf of Durham seized and brought to the Tower of London and kept there'.

By night at Candlemas, 2 February 1101 the bishop escaped. The contemporary historian, Ordericus Vitalis, says that he descended from his window by a rope which friends had conveyed to him in a vessel of wine, an exit occasionally attempted by later prisoners with less success. Flambard, who had made his guards drowsy with drink, was not recaptured. He reached Normandy, made peace with Henry and in 1106 returned to spend many useful years completing the nave of the noble cathedral at Durham.

At that early period, when the chronicler spoke of the Tower of

London he meant the rectangular stone keep, now called the White Tower. The moated concentric castle to which it gave its name was laid out two centuries later by Henry III and his son, Edward I. Originally the White Tower was protected on its east flank by the Roman wall which encompassed the City of London. The City had been slow to submit to William I after the battle of Hastings in 1066 and he distrusted the 'fierce populace'. Soon after his coronation on Christmas Day he started raising hasty defences at this south-east angle between wall and river. The White Tower was begun about ten years later and probably completed by 1097.

Although it served as a prison, it was not planned for that purpose. Built in Caen stone, three storeys high, with walls fifteen feet thick at the base, it contained the chambers and chapel requisite for royal use. William Fitzstephen, the 12th-century monk who was born in the City, called it *arx palatina*, the fortress palace. In front of it were lesser buildings, and on west and north defensive outworks. 'The tower of London with the little castle', was the way a writer described the stronghold in 1141.

A medieval castle commonly had a gaol and we may suppose that the little castle was no exception. Although the Norman kings did not hold their ceremonial courts at the Tower of London, it could not always have been convenient to pen wrongdoers in the keep. There seems usually to have been a batch of these luckless beings under duress. John Stow, author of the *Survey of London*, says that in 1214 King John 'wrote to Geoffrey Magnaville to deliver the tower of London, with the prisoners, armour and all other things found therein, belonging to the king, to William Archdeacon of Huntingdon'. And again in 1326, the citizens of London 'wanne the Tower, wresting the keys out of the Constable's hands, delivered all the Prisoners, and kept both Cittie and Tower to the use of Isabel the



Queen, and Edward her sonne' (later Edward III).

Out of those indeterminate generations a few individuals emerge. The fate of William FitzOsbert, or 'William with the long beard', gives early warning of what condemned prisoners might expect. FitzOsbert was a citizen of London who, 'seditiously moving the common people to seek liberty' in 1196, was brought to the Tower and 'by the heeles drawn thence to the Elmes in Smithfield, and there hanged'. Some city rioters in 1222 had hands or feet cut off.

When this last sentence was carried out, Henry III was king and although still a boy he was already obsessed with the emergent grace of Gothic architecture. During his long reign no royal home remained untouched. Marble pillars, painted walls, gilded angels, thrones, privies, all had to conform to his careful taste. At the Tower of London about 1234 he built or rebuilt the great hall south of the keep. The Wakefield Tower adjoining the great hall was probably his, and also the gateway of the Bloody Tower. In the royal chapel of St Peter ad Vincula, founded in 1185 so that the sovereign might be 'seen to worship' in public, he set up saints and joyous cherubim. He collected exotic pets, including lions and a white bear who fished in the Thames. To accentuate the picture of royal domesticity he had the exterior of the keep whitewashed about 1240. From this refinement it took its name, the White Tower.

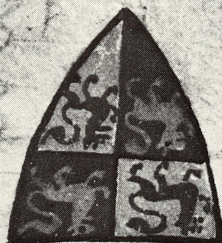
None of these enlivening touches afforded much solace to Henry's captives. His powerful minister, Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, chief justiciar of England, came under his

displeasure in 1231 and spent some time 'bound in chains' in a Tower vault. William le Marish, accused of conspiring to kill the king at Woodstock in 1238, went with his accomplices to 'the direst and most secure prison in that fortress'. They were ordered to be 'so loaded with irons' that there could be no fear of escape.

The Tower had tragic associations for the last native Princes of Wales.

Griffith, son of Llewellyn the Great and a leader of the Welsh national movement, became Henry's unwilling guest in 1241. As a state prisoner, he enjoyed a grant from the royal treasury, robes befitting his rank and the company of his wife, but in 1244 he made a bid for freedom. With desperate courage he 'devised means of escape, and having in the night made of the hangings, sheetes, etc. a long

ei dimicarent. Quia
u. Griffi' leolin filius
ora de turre london
leolin corruens ex
genitus p'rauit
enebatur. et cotidie ad
iracōm uictualem de
piebat. data licentia
pm h'et. tū redio
ut aff'et. cogitauit
sione potat euadere
iū deceptis custodib'
p'cū et mappis fēd
it ppendicūlariter
cū per aliqd spaciū
r'pōit pōndositate
rac q'p' magnus
et sic fractis cūci
uau mane iurta ē
sp'raculū p'ebuit
i cū collo fere totū
Rex aū cum h'au
epando pūciēs. iussit
odem carē detine
is custodiri. Obut
to corruit p'ma die



FACING PAGE: Richard II, aged 14, leaves the Tower to meet Wat Tyler and his rebels during the peasant revolt in 1381. He confronted them at Mile End on 14th June, after which they stormed the Tower and executed some of the officers of state, and again next day at Smithfield, when Tyler was killed.

RIGHT: Griffith, Prince of Wales, falls to his death while attempting to escape in 1244. From Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora* MS 16 fol. 169r. Paris used the symbol of a reversed shield to denote death.

line, he put himself down from the toppe of the Tower'. His life-line proved less adequate than Bishop Ranulf's and in the descent it gave way and he plunged to instant death. 'His head and neck were crushed between his shoulders . . . a most horrid spectacle'. Griffith's son, another Llewellyn, was imprisoned with him. Llewellyn later escaped to Wales, but in 1282 was killed near Builth and his head, crowned with ivy, carried back to London and set upon the Tower. His only child, Gwennlian, died a nun.

The rigid face of Llewellyn looked out over a fortress which, in outline at least, would have appeared not unfamiliar today. Edward I was currently enlarging it and already, in that same year of 1282, was able to accommodate 600 unhappy Jews suspected of adulterating coin of the realm. In 1303 he locked up the Abbot of Westminster and forty-eight monks. His action followed a daring robbery on 14 April that year, when a malcontent named Richard Podelicote broke into the royal treasury at the Abbey. The raid had been carefully planned by Podelicote, William le Palmere, acting keeper of the Palace of Westminster, and

accomplices who included members of the religious community. Some of the monks, it was afterwards stated, had been often in William's company 'in the palace garden, eating and drinking with women of ill fame'. Podelicote obtained a considerable haul, although he did not touch certain treasure such as the 'Great Crown'.

Had Edward been at home the offenders might not have attempted so audacious a scheme, but he was far away, directing his Scottish campaign. When the news reached him he launched characteristically quick action, with the result that the culprits were caught and dealt with. The abbot and his monks had ample time for amendment of life. They remained in the Tower until 1305, when the king returned victorious and in sufficiently mellowed mood to let them out.

To William Wallace, the Scottish patriot captured later that year, he accorded no such mercy. Wallace was brought to London on 22 August 1305, lodged for the night in Fenchurch Street in the city and tried next day in Westminster Hall. He was sentenced to be 'carried from Westminster to the Tower, and from the

Tower to Aldgate, and so through the city to the Elms at Smithfield . . . and as an outlaw beheaded, and . . . your heart, liver, lungs and entrails burned'. Matthew of Westminster, enlarging on the penalty, says that he was tied to horses' tails and at the Elms hanged till nearly dead, his bowels torn out and burned, his head cut off and his body quartered. It was the customary requital for offences interpreted as treason.

Jews had been expelled from England in 1290, but there were still Welsh and Scottish chieftains in the Tower when Edward II succeeded his father in 1307. They in turn join the shadowy throng and are followed by Roger, Lord Mortimer, who in August 1324 escaped after giving his keepers 'a sleepe drinke'. As the paramour of Edward's queen, Isabel, the 'she-wolf of France', Mortimer ruled England with her until her son, Edward III, sent him back to the Tower in irons. From there, on 29 November 1330, he was 'drawn to the Elmes and hanged'. He had been created Earl of March and was the great-grandfather of Edmund Mortimer, the third earl, who in 1368 married Edward III's granddaughter, Philippa, only daughter and heiress of the king's second surviving son, Lionel Duke of Clarence. Through this union the Mortimers became ancestors of the present royal house of England.

Many of the captives of the king's martial prime bore illustrious names and were treated like guests. His brother-in-law, King David of Scotland, was conducted in state to the Tower after he had been taken prisoner at the battle of Nevill's Cross in 1346. Edward himself was then besieging Calais. The town surrendered on 2 August 1347 and the king returned home to hold victory tournaments and founded the Order of the Garter at Windsor. David was joined in the Tower by John de Vienne, commander of Calais, and twelve of his principal supporters, who were soon able to exchange tales of battle with another French hero, Charles of Blois, claimant to the dukedom of Burgundy. He had been captured, severely wounded, while besieging Roche Derien in June 1347.

At Poitiers in 1352 the king's eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, captured King John of France, his son Philip and many great lords and knights. The French king entered



London in royal robes and mounted on a milk-white courser, while beside him rode his conqueror, plainly dressed, on a small black palfrey. His retinue went first to the Tower, where the king himself later spent part of his captivity. When peace was made in 1360, says Stow, King Edward 'came over into England and straight to the Tower, to see the French king then prisoner there, whose ransom he assessed at three Millions of Florences, and so delivered him from prison . . .'

Condemned persons in the Tower at this period were still being hanged among the sad elms of Smithfield, opposite the church of St Bartholomew-the-Great. Wat Tyler and his rebels gave their victims shorter shrift in 1381. After meeting the boy-king, Richard II, at Mile End on 14 June they returned to the Tower with frenzied purpose. Stow records in his *Chronicles of England* (1580) the violence that followed. Invading the precincts, they dragged out 'Simon Sudburie Archbishoppe of Canterbury, Lorde Chauncellour of Englande, Robert Halles Priour of Saint Johns, and Treasurer of England, William Appleton, a Frier Minor the Kings confessour, and John Legge a Sergeaunt of the Kings, and beheaded them on the Tower Hill'.

There was a repetition of the scene early in 1388, after the lords appellant had obtained possession of the Tower and of the king. Among those whom they executed on Tower Hill was Sir Simon Burley, formerly the king's tutor and his close friend. One of the five appellants was King Richard's cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster,



* * *

FACING PAGE: *Richard II became a prisoner in the Tower after his deposition by his cousin Henry IV, in 1399. He died at Pontefract Castle in Yorkshire a year later. A detail from the Wilton Diptych, possibly painted to commemorate his death.*

ABOVE: *Henry VI (1421-1471) and, below, the marble memorial tablet in the oratory of the Wakefield Tower where traditionally he was murdered while at prayer. Richard II's body was removed by Henry V from King's Langley to Westminster Abbey and Henry VI's by Richard III from Chertsey Abbey to St George's Chapel, Windsor.*





ABOVE LEFT: Richard III (1452–1485), uncle of the uncrowned Edward V (1470–1483) and his brother, Richard Duke of York, the 'Princes in the Tower', whose mysterious deaths are commonly attributed to him.

ABOVE RIGHT: The staircase in the Bloody Tower. The princes are believed to have been smothered to death in their bed in the upper chamber and their bodies borne down these winding steps. The Bloody Tower, built by Richard II over a gateway erected by Henry III, was so called on account of its association with the princes as early as 1597. Among those later imprisoned there were Sir Walter Raleigh, Archbishop Laud and Judge Jeffreys.

LEFT: The boy king, Edward V, is on the extreme right of the group in this picture which comes from an illuminated manuscript of the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* in the Lambeth Palace Library.

FACING PAGE: The Chapel Royal of St John the Evangelist in the White Tower, a Norman chapel with a crypt which was used as a prison.

Edward III's fourth son. In 1399 his dream of gaining the crown was realised. The vanquished Richard became a prisoner in the Tower, where on 30 September he signed the deed of abdication, and Bolingbroke succeeded him as Henry IV.

Sovereigns still had no objection to living side by side with their prisoners, so the Tower remained a decorative and often festive place. Two years earlier Richard had kept Christmas in the royal apartments on the water-front. About the same time he brightened the Byward Tower with wall paintings of the Virgin and his own patron, St John the Baptist. Fragments still bear witness to his rich and sensitive taste. Henry IV, following his doomed cousin's lead, held court in the tower before his coronation and on the eve rode in procession through the City to Westminster.

Its august traditions made part of the reminiscence of two royal poets. The young James I of Scotland, author of *The Kingis Quair*, was intercepted at sea in 1406 and, although a truce subsisted between the two countries, he was kept a prisoner. Like Charles Duke of Orleans, whom Henry V captured at Agincourt in 1415, he was sometimes in the Tower, sometimes at 'the fayre castell of Wyndesore' and elsewhere. King James went home in 1423, but Charles of Orleans, head of the French nationals, remained for another seventeen years under English skies. All that time he was composing his ballads and rondels, delicate trifles full of an exact beauty and pathos. His several sojourns in the Tower are recalled by the illuminated copy of his poems in the British Museum, made about 1500. It includes a miniature of the White Tower, rising pale and fanciful as a fairy citadel beside the blue wavelets of the Thames, with Charles of Orleans thrice portrayed in ermine-furred robes. He is seen composing a poem, looking through a window and welcoming a knight at the door.

Religious conflict was already invading the Tower. The Lollards, followers of John Wycliffe, 'daystar of the Reformation', troubled Henry V, prominent among them being his friend, Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. In the original play on which Shakespeare drew for *King Henry IV*, Oldcastle was represented as the companion of Henry V's allegedly wild youth. Shakespeare,

deferring to the protestant outlook of his time, substituted the name of Sir John Falstaff, explaining in the epilogue: 'Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man'. The stage character had nothing in common with the Lollard, who after being 'dampned for . . . an heredyke by all holy chirche' was sent on 23 September 1413 to the Tower, 'here he brake a wey withynne few days'. After conspiring against the king he was recaptured and on 14 December 1417 was 'drawn from the Tower to St Giles's Fields, where he was hanged by the middle with a chain; and a fire being kindled beneath him, he was thus burnt to death'.

These were only a renowned few

among the host of captives, French, Scottish and English, who found themselves in the Tower during Henry V's reign. Soon after his baby son, the sixth Henry, succeeded him in 1422 the House of Commons presented an address 'praying that some order should be taken for the release or due punishment of the great numbers of prisoners confined for treason, heresy and other causes'. In 1441 sorcery was specified. Eleanor Duchess of Gloucester, wife of the king's uncle, Duke Humphrey, was charged with conspiring to kill the king by melting a wax image of him before a slow fire. Among her many accessories were Margery

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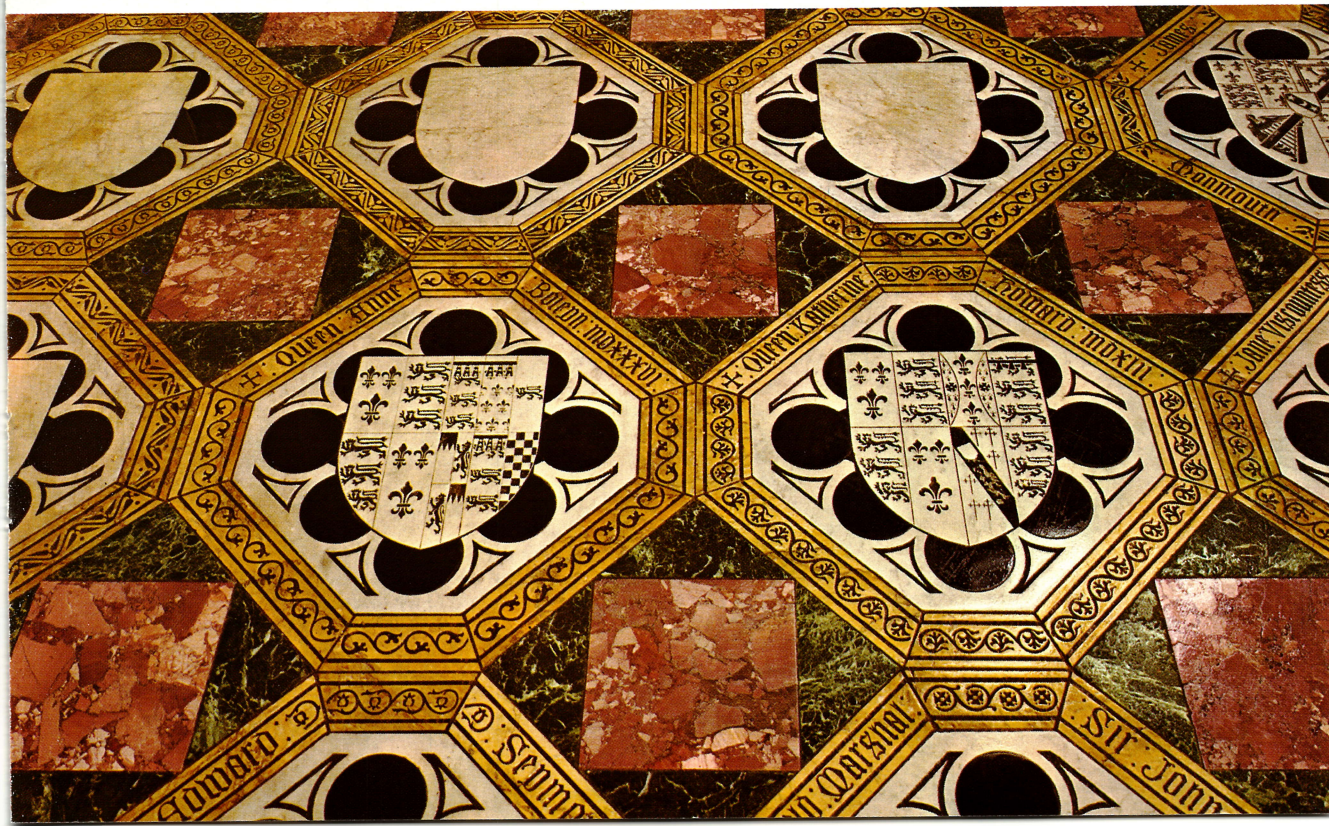


ABOVE: *The Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula in the grounds of the Tower, founded about 1280 and rebuilt in 1513. Immediately in front of it is the old burial ground on Tower Green and the site where private executions took place. Among the seven people who were beheaded on the Green was Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, 'last of the Plantagenets'. The portrait on the left was thought to be that of the Countess but its identity is now doubtful. Others executed here included William, Lord Hastings (1483), Lady Rochford (1542), Lady Jane Grey (1554) and finally Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (1601).*

FACING PAGE (above): *Two others beheaded here were the second and fifth wives of Henry VIII, Queen Anne Boleyn (left) and Queen Catherine Howard (right), who died in 1536 and 1542 respectively. Both queens were buried 'before the high altar' in St Peter's, as recorded in Edmund Howes's*

augmented edition of Stow's Annales, published in 1638.

FACING PAGE (below): *The commemorative green and red marble pavement laid down in the sanctuary during the restoration of the chapel in 1876, which displays the armorial bearings of those who rest beneath. Howes says that 'here lyeth before the high Altar . . . two Dukes, betwene two Queenes, to wit, the Duke of Somerset and the Duke of Northumberland, between Queene Anne, and Queene Catherine, all four beheaded'. Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, was executed in 1552 and John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, in 1553. James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II, who rebelled against his uncle, James II, and was executed in 1685, also has his grave there. The Countess of Salisbury had prepared a chantry at Christchurch Priory, near Bournemouth, but Henry VIII refused to allow her to be buried there and she too was interred in St Peter's.*





Jourdemayne, the Witch of Eye, Thomas Southwell, a canon of Westminster, and Roger Bolingbroke, another priest described as a 'Clerk of Nigromancie'.

The Tower gates closed behind Southwell and Bolingbroke. The former died in his prison, so being spared the three-mile journey on a hurdle to Tyburn, where the Marble Arch now stands. Bolingbroke suffered alone on the gallows there.

The English were driven out of France in 1453 and two years later the Wars of the Roses began at home. In 1465, after wandering for over three years as a fugitive in Scotland, Henry VI became a prisoner in his own Tower of London. His throne had

been usurped by Edward IV, eldest descendant in the male line of Edward III's fifth son, Edmund Duke of York. Edward was also the descendant of Edward III's second surviving son, Lionel Duke of Clarence, whose daughter Philippa had married Edmund Mortimer, 3rd Earl of March. Their granddaughter, born Anne Mortimer, was his grandmother. He was thus descended in the seventh generation from that Roger Mortimer, first Earl of March, who in 1330 had been drawn from the Tower to the Elms and hanged.

After his final victory at Tewkesbury on 3 May 1471, when Henry VI's only child, Edward Prince of Wales, was killed, the deposed king's own

turn came. He died in the Tower eighteen days later, on 21 May. The legend of his death, as recorded in Holinshed's *Chronicle*, was used by Shakespeare in the final act of *King Henry VI*. Edward IV, conferring with his brother George Duke of Clarence, asks where their younger brother Richard Duke of Gloucester has gone. Clarence replies:

*as I guess,
 To make a bloody supper in the Tower.*

In the next scene Gloucester stabs Henry to death.

That the king died by violence, conceivably at the hand of Gloucester and perhaps while at prayer in the Wakefield Tower, is accepted. A marble tablet in the oratory in this

tower marks the spot where traditionally he fell. Upon it, every year on the eve of the anniversary of his death, are placed white lilies for Eton College and white roses for King's College, Cambridge, both of which he founded.

Clarence himself was the next royal victim. Holinshed's account says: 'Finallie the duke was cast into the Tower, and therewith adjudged for a traitor, and privlie drowned in a butt of malmesie, the eleventh of March [1478]'. He left two children, Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, and Margaret, later the wife of Sir Richard Pole and Countess of Salisbury in her own right. The Tower and the axe were to claim both, but their time had not yet come. Gloucester's ambitions had a more immediate obstacle in Edward IV's two young sons, Edward V and Richard Duke of York.

These were the 'Princes in the Tower', whose death has been firmly attributed to their uncle, the future Richard III. Edward IV died on 9 April 1483 and early in April Edward V was escorted to the Tower by Gloucester, who assumed the role of Protector. Officially the new king was there to await his coronation.

On 13 June, when many lords were assembled in the council chamber to plan the ceremony, Gloucester suddenly entered 'with a wonderful

soure angrie countenance' and proclaimed that his life had been threatened. As a cry of 'Treason' resounded from without, 'in come there rushing men in harness, as manie as the chamber might hold'. Then Gloucester denounced William, Lord Hastings, the trusted friend of Edward IV, who he 'bad speed and shrive him apace, "for, by saint Paule" (quoth he) "I will not to dinner till I see thy head off!" It booted him not to ask whie, but heavilie he tooke a priest at adventure, and made a short shrift, for . . . the protector made so much hast to dinner. . . . So he was brought forth to the greene beside the chappell within the Tower; and his head laid downe upon a long log of timber, and there stricken off'.

Three days after Hastings' death Gloucester forced the queen to let her second son join his brother. For a short time the boys were seen playing and shooting at butts in the garden, but then they were 'withdrawn into the inner apartments of the Tower proper, and day by day began to appear more rarely behind the bars and windows, till at last they ceased to appear altogether'. Sir Thomas More's account of 'the dolorous end of those babes' says that their murder was planned by Sir James Tyrell, one of

Richard III's gentlemen, who recruited two assassins to smother them in their bed. They were reputedly murdered in the Garden Tower, later renamed the Bloody Tower on this account, and buried in the precincts. In 1674, when workmen were demolishing a stone staircase on the south side of the White Tower, they found a chest containing the skeletons of two children. None doubted that these were Edward IV's sons and by order of Charles II the remains were reinterred in the Innocents' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

During Richard III's reign his other nephew, the Earl of Warwick, was 'kept in ward' at Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire. Henry VII, who married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV, and founded the Tudor dynasty, had him removed to the Tower of London, and there he spent the rest of his youth in close and melancholy confinement. His death being politically desirable, he was condemned in 1499 on a charge of conspiring to escape with his fellow prisoner, the pretender Perkin Warbeck. Warbeck was hanged at Tyburn on 23 November and Warwick beheaded on Tower Hill five days later. On the next tide his body was borne to Bisham Abbey, in Berkshire, and laid with his

Continued on page 14

FACING PAGE (left): Two of the many memorials of prisoners carved on the inner walls of the Beauchamp Tower. The upper one, an elaborate piece of sculpture, commemorates the five Dudley brothers: John Earl of Warwick (died 1554), Ambrose (Earl of Warwick 1561), Guildford (beheaded 1554), Robert (Earl of Leicester 1564) and Henry (killed at the siege of St Quentin 1557). Under the lion supporting the ragged staff is the name IOHN DVDLE and around them are roses for Ambrose, oak leaves for Robert (from the Latin *robur*, an oak), gillyflowers for Guildford and honeysuckle for Henry. The inscription IANE is supposed to allude to Lord Guildford's wife, Lady Jane Grey (right), the 'nine days queen', who was beheaded soon after her husband in 1554.

RIGHT: Sir Thomas Wyatt, whose rebellion in 1554 implicated the future Elizabeth I and led to her own imprisonment.



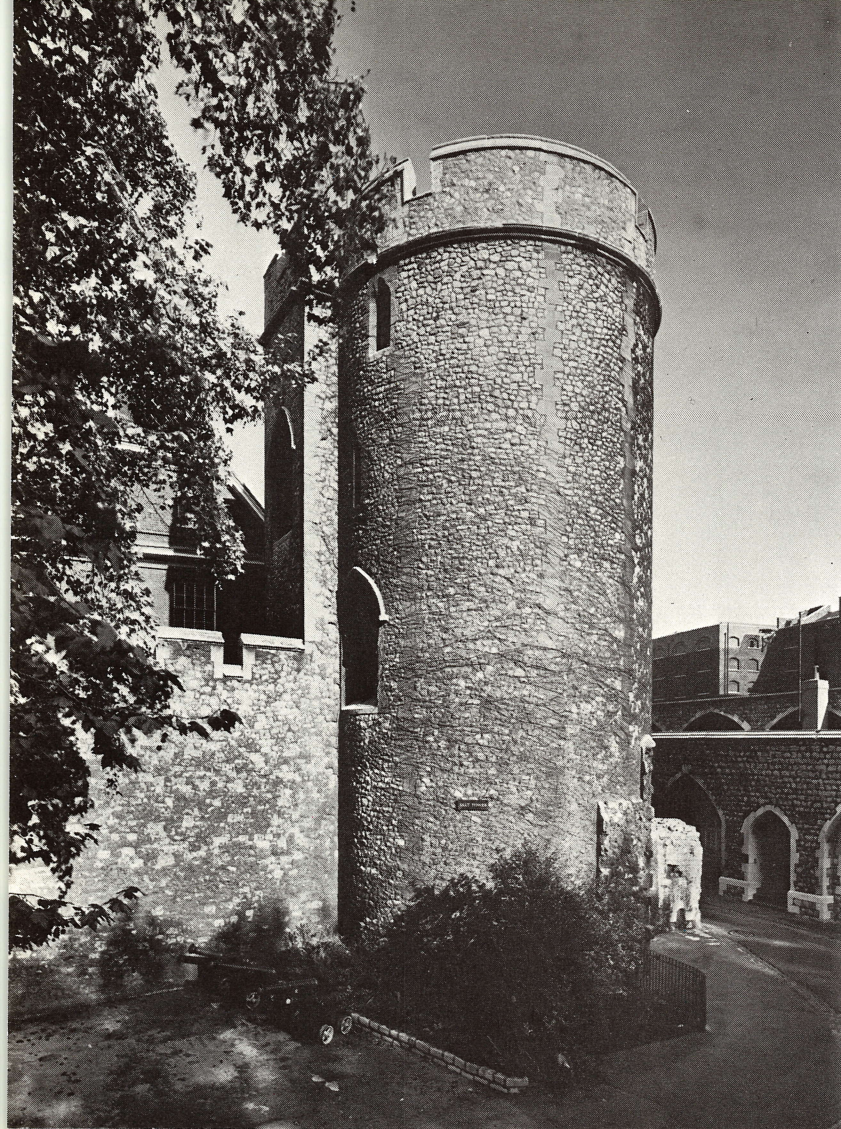




FACING PAGE (above left): Elizabeth I (1533–1603), aged about 13; (right): her half-sister, Mary I (1516–1558), who sent Elizabeth to the Tower in 1554. FACING PAGE (below right): Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (c. 1531–1588), brother of Lord Guildford Dudley, husband of Lady Jane Grey. Although he shared in the disgrace of his family after Mary's

accession and was imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower, Leicester became one of Elizabeth's favourite courtiers, like Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (1566–1601), (far left). Essex led a revolt against Elizabeth and was beheaded. ABOVE: Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton (1573–1624), who was involved in Essex's conspiracy. This portrait, attributed to Marcus

Gheeraerts, was painted after his release by James I in 1603. His cat is the most famous of the domestic pets who cheered prisoners through the centuries. 'I.A.B.' (probably John Augustus Bonney, a political prisoner) composed the epitaph of a cat named Citizen in 1794, and a goldfinch who 'cheerful sung' was similarly commemorated.



ABOVE: The Salt Tower, which has particular associations with Jesuit sufferers and martyrs in the 16th and 17th centuries. The monogram IHS with a cross above the H, a form commonly used by the Society of Jesus, occurs several times among the carvings in its stone chambers, as does the pierced heart, hand and foot signifying the five wounds of Christ. Conspicuous too is a 'figure for casting horoscopes' cut on 30th May 1561 by Hugh Draper, of Bristol, an unfortunate inn-keeper accused of witchcraft and 'very sick'.

FACING PAGE: Leading conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, 5th November 1605. It was planned about January 1604 by Robert Catesby, Robert Winter his cousin, and John Wright. Guy Fawkes was brought over from Flanders in April 1605.



ancestors. His sister, later Countess of Salisbury, the mother of Cardinal Reginald Pole, survived until Henry VIII became uneasy and struck at the family. Her eldest son, Henry Lord Montagu, a prisoner in the Beauchamp Tower, was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1539 and she herself, last of the Plantagenets, 'in a corner of the Tower' in 1541. Her three grandsons, Henry, Arthur and Edmund Pole, all died in captivity in the Tower.

Another family of Yorkist claimants, the de la Poles, sons of Edward IV's sister Elizabeth, Duchess of Suffolk, also left their names deeply engraved in its history. Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, ended his life on Tower Hill on 4 May 1513 after seven years imprisonment. Sir James Tyrell of dubious memory, who had chosen to befriend him, had perished at the same spot long before, on 6 May 1502. The earl's next surviving brother, William, stayed within the Tower's grim shades from 1501 until death released him in 1539.

At the time of Margaret Pole's death saints and martyrs were already enriching its annals. Sir Thomas More, peering out of his prison window a few years earlier, on 4 May 1535, had seen 'one Master Reynolds, a religious, learned and virtuous father of Syon, and three monks of the Charterhouse, for the matters of the Matrimony and Supremacy going out of the Tower to execution', and marked their cheerfulness as they took the road to Tyburn. He had little doubt that his own end was near. As lord chancellor he too had refused to acknowledge Henry VIII as supreme head of the English Church, and he had continued adamant in March 1534, when the king's subjects were required to subscribe to the oath imposed. He had also protested against the divorce of Catherine of Aragon, who had given Henry only one living child, the Princess Mary. On 17 April 1534 More was committed to the Tower, together with John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who had also refused to take the oath. Both were in the Bell Tower, though not together.

In June 1535 More was found to be in communication with his friend and deprived of ink, whereupon he used a coal. His wife visited him and reproachfully asked why he was content to remain 'in this close, filthy prison . . . shut up among mice



and rats' when he might be merry at home, but he only said, 'Is not this house as nigh heaven as my own?' Fisher, who was also in sad plight, having 'neither shirt, nor sute . . . but that bee ragged, and rent so shamefully', was the first to leave his stony cell. King Henry had vowed, on hearing that the pope meant to make him a cardinal, that if a hat arrived there should be no head for it, and he kept his word. The bishop was executed on Tower Hill on 22 June 1535 and More a fortnight later, on 7 July. Both were canonised in 1935.

Less than a year passed before Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, whose coronation More had refused to attend, was taken to the Tower on a charge of adultery. Before her crowning she had stayed in the timber-framed residence now called The Queen's House, which had been built below the Bell Tower about 1530, and as a prisoner she returned there. 'Shall I go into a dungyn?' she asked, and was told, 'No madam you shall go into your logyng that you lay in at your coronacion'. Her trial took place in the medieval great hall, since demolished, where she was sentenced to be burned or beheaded as pleased the king. On 19 May 1536, in front of the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula, her head was cut off by an executioner brought from Calais.

Within the chapel, rebuilt in 1512, she shares her eternal rest with More and Fisher. There too lie her cousin, Catherine Howard, Henry's fifth wife, and Jane Lady Rochford, who had been party to the infidelity of this pretty, promiscuous girl. Both were beheaded on 13 February 1542 and like Lord Hastings, Anne Boleyn and Margaret Pole, met their end on Tower Green.

These two ill-fated consorts had owed their advancement to their uncle, Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk. When the duke brought Catherine to royal notice in 1540 he had recently arrested Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, promoter of the Reformation, and the fallen minister was in the Tower. Archbishop Cranmer sorrowfully protested, but in vain. The ingrate sovereign had not forgiven Cromwell for arranging his abortive fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves. He was beheaded on 28 July 1540. Cranmer, who was himself to suffer imprisonment in the Tower in later years, remained at the head of the Protestant party with the Seymours, brothers of the king's third wife, Jane Seymour.

Towards the end of Henry VIII's life the enmity between Seymours and Howards led to the arrest of Norfolk and his son, Henry Earl of Surrey, the poet. They were supposed to have

plotted against the persons of the king and his heir, Prince Edward, son of Queen Jane. On 12 December 1546 Surrey was taken on foot to the Tower: a calculated indignity, as noblemen commonly went by covered barge to the water-gate. His lodging overlooked the river and consisted of a bedroom with a privy leading out of it. The privy, which was a well in the floor beneath which the tide rose and fell, suggested a way of escape. A wherry and rowers having been hired by his servant, Surrey began to let himself down the privy one midnight, but before he could drop into the water he was recaptured and chained. He was beheaded on Tower Hill on 19 January 1547. Henry VIII's death a week later saved Norfolk from the same fate.

During the reign of the young Edward VI the continued battle for power was again resolved on the scaffold. His uncle, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Protector, lost office to John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and was beheaded on Tower Hill on 22 January 1552. Somerset himself had already despatched his younger brother, Thomas, Lord Seymour of Sudeley, lord high admiral of England, who married Henry's widow, Catherine Parr. Thomas Seymour was executed on 20 March 1549, dying 'very daunger-

ously, yrksomelye, horryblye'. When Somerset in turn reached the Tower his wife went too, with her gentlewomen and menservants. The 'Daily Dietts of the Duches of Som'sett' included beef, mutton boiled and roast, capons, rabbits and larks, mustard, onions, butter for basting, beer and wine. But not everyone lived like this.

After marrying his fourth son, Lord Guildford Dudley, to Lady Jane Grey, who was in the line of succession, Northumberland persuaded Edward on his deathbed to transfer to her the rights of his sisters, the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth. After the king's death on 6 July 1553, Lady Jane was publicly proclaimed at the Tower, but within eight days Mary's supporters rose in strength. On 31 July Lady Jane's father, Henry Duke of Suffolk, entered her presence chamber in the

Tower, tore down the canopy of state and told her she was no longer queen. She begged to go home, but he turned away. She was now a state prisoner, and he himself was soon to share her fate. Lady Jane's last lodging was in the home of Nathaniel Partridge, the Gentleman Gaoler, next to the Queen's House. From her window, on 12 February, 1554, she watched her husband go from the Beauchamp Tower to his death on Tower Hill, and presently, 'hys body beyng layde in a Carre, and hys head in a cloth', she 'did see his dead carcase taken out of the Carre'. On the Green preparations were being made for her own execution later that day. She was buried with Lord Guildford in the chapel, which also holds the bones of Northumberland, executed on 22 November 1553, and his old enemy, Protector Somerset.

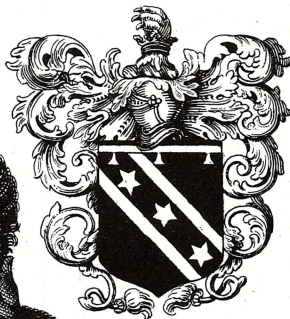
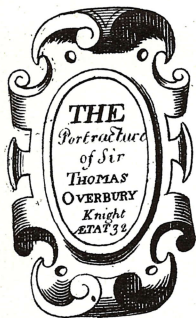
Although she herself was probably never in the Beauchamp Tower, the inscription IANE on the stone wall of the great chamber traditionally commemorates her. The Beauchamp Tower had long been a prison for persons of rank. It presumably took its name from Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, one of the lords appellant in Richard II's reign, who was sent there in 1397 and released by Henry IV. The tower is a storehouse of historic graffiti, many of which relate to the Poles and Dudleys.

In the crypt of the Chapel Royal of St John the Evangelist in the White Tower there are more carvings, done by rebels who took part in Sir Thomas Wyatt's rising in January 1554. Wyatt had demanded the surrender of the fortress, but he entered as a prisoner. Already it was peopled with some of the martyrs of Mary I's reign. Archbishop Cranmer, whose skill had produced the Book of Common Prayer, was sharing the captivity of Bishops Latimer and Ridley, as he presently shared with them the stake and the flames at Oxford.

Princess Elizabeth herself, hope of the Protestants, followed Wyatt to the Tower. She was taken downstream from Whitehall on Palm Sunday, 18 March 1554, and so came to the water-gate, the 'Traitors' Gate', through which her mother, Anne Boleyn, had passed. The threat of death was very real. But nothing could be proved against her, and Wyatt, before his execution on 11 April, declared that 'mye Ladye Elizabethes grace . . . never knewe of the conspiracye, nether of mye fyrst Risinge'. The princess's apartment was in the Bell Tower, and she took the air on the ramparts between that and the Beauchamp Tower, an airy promenade since known as 'Elizabeth's Walk'.

She in turn, when she was queen, locked up Lady Katherine Grey, Lady Jane's younger sister, who had offended by secretly marrying Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, son of Protector Somerset. In the Bell Tower, where the lieutenant, Sir Edward Warner, let her have her troop of dogs and monkeys, the woeful girl gave birth on 24 September 1561 to a son, Edward Viscount Beauchamp. He was baptised in St Peter's chapel, where so many of his headless relatives lay. Hertford himself was by this time in the White Tower. The lieutenant presently let





the couple meet, with the result that in 1563 a second son was born. The enraged queen imprisoned Warner in one of his own dungeons and the Hertfords were parted for ever. Katherine, still a prisoner, died of consumption in Suffolk five years later.

* * *

FACING PAGE: *Sir Walter Raleigh* (c. 1552–1618). During his first imprisonment in 1603–1616, most of which was spent in the Bloody Tower, Raleigh not only engaged in chemical experiments but also composed for Henry Prince of Wales his *History of the World* (1614).

ABOVE LEFT: *Sir Thomas Overbury* (1581–1613).

ABOVE RIGHT: *Mrs Anne Turner, widow of a physician, who was among the accomplices of the Countess of Essex in the murder of Overbury by poison.*

Their piteous history repeated itself, though less fruitfully. Lord Beauchamp in turn had a son, William Seymour, later 2nd Duke of Somerset, who in 1610 secretly wed Lady Arabella Stuart, cousin of James I. Both were imprisoned and both escaped a year later, he from the Tower, which he quitted in the guise of a carter. The poor lady was recaptured and herself taken to the Tower, where she died 'distracted' in 1615.

The use of torture added to the severities in the 16th century. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* vividly records the sufferings of Mrs Anne Askew, a valiant Protestant, who was shamefully racked in the Tower before being burned to death at Smithfield in 1546. In 1572, when Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk, Surrey's son, was there after plotting to marry Mary Queen of Scots, 'others concerned in this business were also apprehended, and some of the privy council were engaged for many days, and even nights, at the Tower, in examining them, and exhorting confessions, by means of the rack'. It appears that this was done on Elizabeth I's orders.

Another time, when Jesuit priests were tortured, an apologetic urged that even in the 'necessary use of such proceeding', acknowledgment must be made of the 'sweet temperature of her majesty's mild and gracious clemency', but nothing in the records of the Tower suggests that she attempted amelioration in the penal department. Norfolk himself, at his trial, pleaded that his memory had been impaired by his 'evil usage'. About 1590, long after his headless body had been laid 'in the chappell in the Towre, by mr.dean of Paules', another group of prisoners was experiencing trials less severe but still gloomy. While some enjoyed guarded 'libertie of the leades', or the garden, most of them, including two women, were kept 'close prisoner'.

The seventh and last execution on Tower Green took place in Elizabeth I's reign. It was that of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the headstrong young favourite who rebelled against her and was beheaded on 25 February 1601. The Essex Ring, now in Westminster Abbey, is said to have been given to him by the queen, with the direction that if ever he



were in trouble he was to send it back to her and she would save him. From the Tower he tried to return it, but it did not reach her.

Among those who took part in his rebellion and shared his captivity, though not his eventual fate, was Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron. Tradition claims that soon after Southampton arrived at the Tower he was unexpectedly joined by his black and white cat, who followed him and descended the chimney to his apartment. This resolute animal is seated at his elbow in a portrait painted about the time of his release in 1603, in one corner of which there is a view of the Tower with swans on the river in front.

Such redeeming stories are few. In James I's reign the Tower continued to exercise its wonted rigour, the most famous of his prisoners being Guy Fawkes. The Gunpowder Plot, a conspiracy to blow up king and parliament on 5 November 1605, was organised in retaliation for the king's severity towards Roman Catholics. It was betrayed, but not until 4 November was the cellar under the House of Lords searched and the barrels of gunpowder discovered. Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were taken to the Tower and

interrogated in the council chamber in the Queen's House. He himself was racked, perhaps in the basement of the Wakefield Tower, where the instruments of torture are believed to have been kept. On 31 January 1606, in company with three others, he was drawn on a hurdle from the Tower to the Houses of Parliament and there hanged, beheaded and quartered.

Anguish both of mind and body was never more sharply inflicted than on Sir Thomas Overbury, the poet. Flung into the Tower's 'securest dungeon' at the instance of Frances Countess of Essex, whose marriage to his friend, Robert Ker, Viscount Rochester, he opposed, Overbury was systematically poisoned and finally destroyed by 'an administration of corrosive sublimate'. He died on 15 September 1613 and his body, 'all disfigured with sores and ulcers', was instantly wrapped in a sheet and hurried to a grave in the chapel. Two years passed before his murderers were brought to justice. The accomplices, who included Sir Gervase Elwes, lieutenant of the Tower, where hanged, but Ker and his infamous wife were presently pardoned.

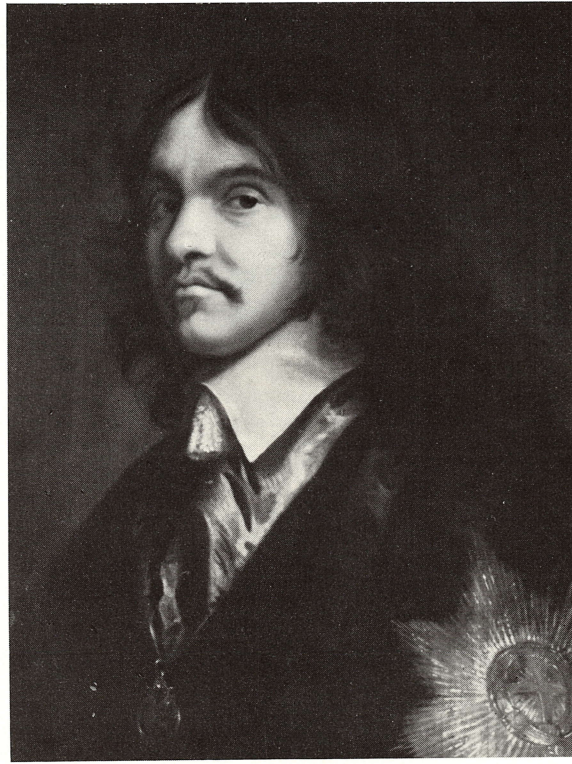
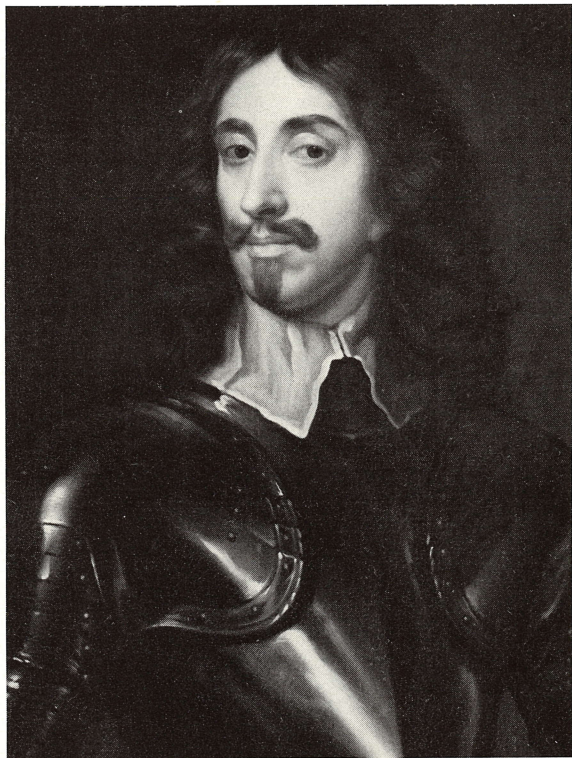
At the time Overbury was being done to death the other prisoners included Sir

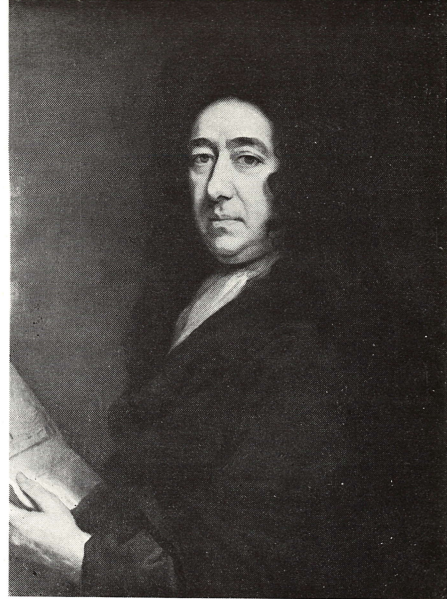
Walter Raleigh. He spent twelve years in the Tower on a charge of plotting against the king, his solace being the

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ABOVE: Prominent among 17th-century prisoners in the Tower were the supporters of Charles I, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury (1573-1645), and (right) Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford (1593-1641), both of whom were beheaded.

FACING PAGE: Four of the King's commanders in the Civil War. (Above left) Henry Rich, 1st Earl of Holland, who attempted to reconcile king and parliament, but was executed on 9th March 1649 together with Arthur Lord Capel (top right) and James Duke of Hamilton (bottom right). Sir John Owen, Vice-Admiral of North Wales and Governor of Harlech Castle (bottom left), was sentenced to death but reprieved and died in 1666.





conversion of a little hen-house into a still-house, 'where he doth spend all the day in distillations'. Raleigh was released in 1616, only to find himself back in 1618 after his fruitless expedition to look for gold mines in Guiana. This time he was kept for six weeks in 'one of the most cold and direful dungeons' before being beheaded on 29 October 1618. In the speech which it was customary to make from the scaffold he thanked God that he died in the light, and not 'in the dark prison in the Tower'.

A great statesman, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and an outstanding Archbishop of Canterbury,

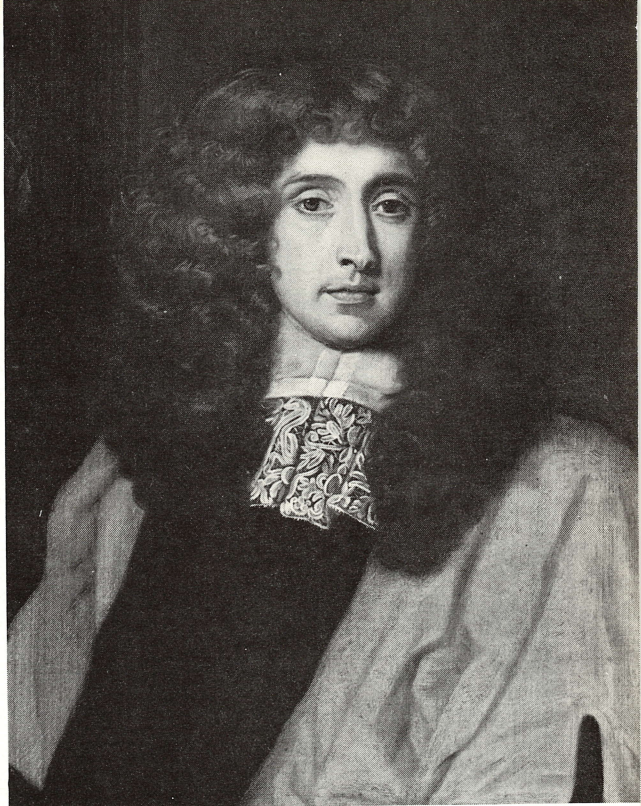
William Laud, both associated with the autocratic rule of Charles I, were prisoners in 1641. When Strafford was led to execution on Tower Hill on 12 May, Laud stood half-fainting at his window to bless his friend as he passed. A vast crowd watched Strafford's head fall. Laud was still awaiting trial when London set up its barricades against the king's forces in 1642. Not until the royalist cause was crumbling two and a half years later did he take the same path as Strafford. He was beheaded on Tower Hill on 10 January 1645.

Although the captured king himself was not taken to the Tower before his

execution, some of the most eminent royalist leaders passed through its dungeons. The Duke of Hamilton, Lord Capel and Sir John Owen, who had all three shared the king's imprisonment at Windsor Castle, were removed from the one fortress to the other. The Earls of Holland and Norwich also awaited trial there. At the Restoration in 1660 the position was reversed and Charles II rounded up regicides and put them in the Tower. John Evelyn, on 17 October that year, met the mangled and reeking remains of three of them coming in baskets from Charing Cross, where they had suffered a traitor's death.



JAMES DE OF MONMOUTH.



Evelyn mentioned the occurrence as mildly as he might have named a friend who had crossed his path. The judicial history of the Tower rendered it not in the least forbidding and it never lacked visitors. Some went to

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FACING PAGE (left): *The Bell Tower. The windows in the curtain wall to the east are those of the Queen's House and one of them lights the Council Chamber, where Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were examined in 1605 before their public trial at Westminster.*

FACING PAGE (right): *Sir Anthony Deane (above), London-born descendant of a family of Gloucestershire landowners. He was not only the fellow-prisoner of Samuel Pepys (below) in 1679 but with him was twice member of parliament for Harwich, and he was a pall-bearer at Pepys's funeral at St Olave's, Hart Street, near the Tower, in 1703.*

ABOVE: *James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, and (right) George Jeffreys, Baron Wem, who in 1685 conducted at Winchester the 'Bloody Assizes', when many of Monmouth's supporters were sentenced to death or transportation.*

see the lions, others to call on the prisoners. Samuel Pepys, future Secretary to the Admiralty, cheered Sir William Coventry on several occasions in 1669, after the latter had quarrelled with the royal favourite, that 'silly, vain man', the Duke of Buckingham. So great a concourse went to the Tower to visit Sir William that one day 'there were not less than sixty coaches there', which annoyed the king when he heard of it.

Ten years later Evelyn performed the same kind office for Pepys, who was sent to the Tower on 22 May 1679, together with his friend, Sir Anthony Deane, the shipbuilder. Evelyn dined with Pepys and then saluted the lords Stafford and Petre, who were among Roman Catholic noblemen immured in the Tower on account of the alleged Popish Plot. Pepys and Deane, both good Protestants, were victims of their enemies' malice and received the sympathetic attentions of King Charles himself, who sent them a fat buck from his forest of Enfield Chase. They were soon released and all charges dropped.

A spectacular succession of personalities followed in James II's short reign. Charles II's natural son, James Duke of Monmouth, reached the

Tower on 13 July 1685, after the failure of his armed revolt against his uncle. Forty-eight hours later a menacing crowd watched Jack Ketch, the executioner, inflict 'five Chopps' before he took off that handsome but unprincipled head. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Ely, Chichester, St Asaph, Bristol, Peterborough and Bath and Wells passed through kneeling crowds to imprisonment in the Tower on 8 June 1688, a few months before King James fled to France. His Protestant son-in-law, William Prince of Orange, landed at Torbay on 5 November. On 11 December his lord chancellor, George Jeffreys, Baron Wem, better known as Judge Jeffreys, woke to find that the king had gone and himself hastened into hiding. Disguised as a seaman, he made for an outgoing ship, but next day a scrivener recognised him in a Wapping ale-house. The man who had dealt so ruthlessly with Monmouth's followers, and before whom all had trembled, was hauled by militia to the safety of the Tower, while the mob followed shrieking and holding out halters. Jeffreys had long suffered ill health, which the damp winter cold of the Tower did nothing to alleviate. On 19 April 1689, in his



prison, he was in the course of nature 'delivered out of all his troubles and miseries'.

The events of 1688 echoed and re-echoed through the Tower after the accession of the House of Hanover. Two Scottish lords who in 1715 supported James II's son, the Old Pretender, spent their last hours there. On the scaffold on 24 February 1716 the young James Radclyffe, 3rd Earl Derwentwater, and William Gordon, 6th Viscount Kenmure, publicly confirmed their devotion to him before the axe fell. William Maxwell, 5th Earl of Nithsdale, had been condemned to suffer with them, but on the very eve of the appointed day he escaped by the agency of his wife. She had come to him through snow-drifts from Scotland, and with the help of her maid and two friends she smuggled a woman's cloak and hood into his prison in the Queen's House. Dressed in these garments, and with a handkerchief held over his face as if he were weeping, he went with her through the darkening council chamber and past the guards. Later he travelled with servants of the Venetian ambassador to Dover and crossed the Channel.

The 1745 rebellion, led by the Young Pretender, brought more Jacobite leaders to the Tower, among them Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat. He had been an intriguer for most of his eighty years and his trial in March 1747 commanded exceptional interest. Edward Bigge, a lawyer of Newcastle-

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LEFT: *Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat (1667-1747), and below, his execution block. Lovat was arrested for his part in the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. His execution for high treason in 1747 was the last time the block and axe were used. They are in the Bowyer Tower.*

FACING PAGE (above): *John Wilkes, 'that devil Wilkes' as George III called him. He was imprisoned for libel of the king in 1763, but later released on the ground of privilege as a member of parliament.*

FACING PAGE (below): *Lord George Gordon, who led the 'no Popery' Gordon Riots in 1780. Queen Charlotte, returning to London with George III on account of the troubles, was shocked to find property on fire and destroyed, prisoners let loose and law-abiding citizens going in fear of their lives. He was later acquitted on the grounds of 'no treasonable intention'.*



upon-Tyne and Lincoln's Inn, was among those who attended it. Never in his life, Bigge wrote indignantly to his old friend, John Milbank of Thorpe Perrow in Yorkshire, had he heard such strong treason. After the aged peer had been found guilty and sentenced to death a gruesome little story went round London. Bigge relayed it to Thorpe Perrow. Lord Lovat, it was said, had 'Petitioned his Majesty to be Hanged, which was rejected. His Neck is very short & his shoulders almost as high as his head, so yt. unless he stretch it out, his Shoulders must receive most part of the Blow, yet I make not the least doubt the Executioner will do his Duty properly'.

It was a sight not to be missed. When Lord Lovat was beheaded on 9 April Bigge took John Milbank's two elder sons to share 'the days sport'. A scaffold near the church of All Hallows By-the-Tower, being overloaded with spectators, broke down and about twenty people were killed and twice that number injured, a morbid repletion which earned only passing comment in the account sent by Mr Bigge to Thorpe Perrow. The central spectacle had met with his warm approval. 'Lord Lovat', he told John Milbank, 'was this day between the Hours of 12 & 1 o'Clock Executed on Tower Hill, who behaved with great Intrepidity & looked death in the face, with a smiling Countenance, & after about 5 Minits Harrange to the populace, he laid down his head to the Block, which was struck off at one Blow, & at the same stroke the Ax was near two Inches in the Block, a prodigious Stroke indeed.'

The block preserved today in the Bowyer Tower is traditionally the one on which Lord Lovat laid his too-short neck. A new block was made for each execution and as this one stands 24.8 inches high, at least four inches more than usual, it seems designed for an infirm and obese person. Beside it is the axe which in the lawyer's judgment played so worthy a part that day. It has never been used since. Lord Lovat, who was buried in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula, was the last person to be beheaded in England.

The last nobleman to suffer a felon's death reached the Tower on 13 February 1760. He was Laurence Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers, who had murdered his land steward with a

pistol shot. On 5 May, in accordance with ancient custom, he was delivered to the sheriffs at the outermost gate of the Tower, whence he drove to Tyburn gallows in his own carriage, accompanied by mourners, hearse and coffin. As his sentence had decreed, his body was dissected at Surgeons' Hall and exposed for three days to a gratified public.

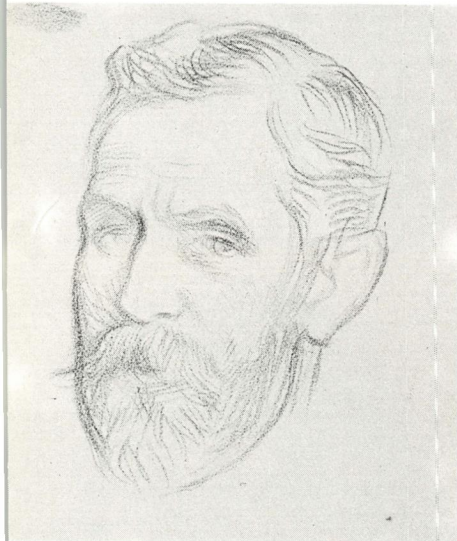
John Wilkes, that fascinating troublemaker who championed a free press and became Lord Mayor of London, went to the Tower on 30 April 1763, after attacking George III in the *North Briton*. His position as a member of parliament entitled him to its aristocratic seclusion. The king, writing to tell Lord Bute of his arrest, added that committal to the Tower was 'a civility ever shown to the H[ouse] of Com[mons]'. Wilkes's confinement was strict but short. To the delight of the public he was released by the lord chief justice on 6 May.

No supporter of religious persecution or mob rule, it was Wilkes who in 1780 took a decisive part in quelling the Gordon Riots against Roman Catholics. On 9 June, after London had endured a week of terror, the embattled Tower received the author of the riots, Lord George Gordon, and he remained there until the following February, when he was tried and acquitted on the ground that he 'had no treasonable intention'. An irrepressible fanatic, he was later imprisoned again, not in the Tower but Newgate, where he died of gaol fever in 1793.

While walking on 3 December 1780 in the armoury (then on the site of the present Waterloo Barracks) Lord George met Henry Laurens, former President of the American Congress, who had been committed to the Tower on 6 October. Lord George would have liked to talk, but the other withdrew, fearing the ill-will of the resident governor, whose arbitrary conduct towards him he described in an account published in 1857. Laurens had been captured while voyaging to Holland on behalf of the future United States of America. The war of independence was not yet over and he was detained 'on suspicion of high treason'.

'Mr Laurens,' he had been told at Whitehall, 'you are to be sent to the Tower of London, not to a prison; you must have no idea of a prison.' The effect of these gracious words





ABOVE: Rudolf Hess, last of the long roll of prisoners in the Tower. He was captured in 1941 after trying to make a personal peace offer and was confined in the Tower and then elsewhere in England until the Second World War ended in 1945, when he was sentenced at Nuremberg to life imprisonment at Spandau.

BELOW: Roger Casement, the Irish rebel who was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower while awaiting trial for treason, for which crime he was eventually hanged.

was soon dissipated. On reaching the fortress he was conducted to a warder's house on the Parade, the most public part of all, and 'shut up in two small rooms ... a warder my constant companion; and a fixed bayonet under my window'. A further disagreeable surprise awaited him: 'I discovered I was to pay rent for my little rooms, find my own meat and drink, bedding, coals, candles, &c.' After he had spent a year behind bars the resident governor sent to ask him for £100 due to the warders for their attendance. Formerly, he was told, such demands were sometimes discharged by state prisoners. The American replied with spirit that as he had not employed the warders he would not pay them.

On 31 December 1781 Laurens was released on parole and eventually he was exchanged for the British commander, Lord Cornwallis, whose surrender to Washington at Yorktown brought the war virtually to an end. He was among those who signed the preliminaries of peace in Paris on 30 November 1782. Back home in South Carolina he set down the account 'Of his Confinement in the Tower of London', an important document apart from its retaliatory disclosures.

The Cato Street Conspiracy in February 1820 yielded another party of prisoners. That was the time when public feeling against the Government was embittered by the 'Peterloo' slaughter in the previous August. It led to a desperate plot being laid by 'physical-force Radicals' under Arthur Thistlewood, their intention being to murder the whole Cabinet as it sat at dinner. On 3 March 1820 Thistlewood and his seven accomplices were taken to the Tower. He and four of the others were presently hanged at Newgate.

In both World Wars the Tower fulfilled its ancient role. The rebel, Roger Casement, captured on 24 April 1916 after sailing for Ireland in a German submarine, was lodged there while awaiting his trial for treason. A former British consular agent, Casement had been knighted in 1911. He was sentenced to death on 29 June 1916, deprived of his knighthood on the following day and hanged at Pentonville Prison on 3 August.

A last sensational story is provided by Rudolf Hess, Adolf Hitler's deputy, whose vision of cutting short the Second World War led him to make a personal peace offer to this country in May 1941. Piloting a Messerschmitt and dressed as a flight-lieutenant of the Luftwaffe, he

flew from Augsburg and baled out over Scotland. His immediate aim was to approach the Duke of Hamilton, through whom he hoped to obtain access to George VI and the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

The Duke of Hamilton was commanding a fighter-sector in East Scotland. He saw Hess on the afternoon of Sunday 11 May, when the latter was recovering from a leg injury caused by his parachute landing the night before, and that evening flew to Northolt to give the news to the Prime Minister. Not until the German radio reported on 12 May that the deputy Führer was missing was the prisoner's identity proven beyond doubt.

Sir Winston, in his history of the war, describes the exploit as a 'devoted and frantic deed of lunatic benevolence'. On his orders Hess, though strictly isolated, was treated with dignity at the Tower of London, which he reached on 16 May, and at his subsequent places of captivity in this country. Convicted at Nuremberg, he was still in the Allied war criminals jail in Spandau, West Berlin, 'most expensive and loneliest prisoner in the world', when he reached his 90th birthday on 26 August 1984.

★

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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